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BOCCIONI
CARRÀ
RUSSOLO
BALLA
SEVERINI
SOFFICI

Initial Manifesto of Futurism.

(Published by the "Figaro," February 20th, 1909.)

1. We shall sing the love of danger, the habit of energy and boldness.

2. The essential elements of our poetry shall be courage, during, and rebellion.

3. Literature has hitherto glorified thoughtful immobility, ecstasy and sleep; we shall extol aggressive movement, feverish insomnia, the double quick step, the somersault, the box on the ear, the fisticuff.

4. We declare that the world's splendour has been enriched by a new beauty; the beauty of speed. A racing motor-car, its frame adorned with great pipes, like snakes with explosive breath . . . a roaring motor-car, which looks as though running on shrapnell, is more beautiful than the VICTORY OF SAMOTHRACE.

5. We shall sing of the man at the steering wheel, whose ideal stem transfixes the Earth, rushing over the circuit of her orbit.

6. The poet must give himself with frenzy, with splendour and with lavishness, in order to increase the enthusiastic fervour of the primordial elements.

7. There is no more beauty except in strife. No masterpiece without aggressiveness. Poetry must be a violent onslaught upon the unknown forces, to command them to bow before man.

8. We stand upon the extreme promontory of the centuries! . . . Why should we look behind us, when we have to break in the mysterious portals of the Impossible? Time and Space died yesterday. Already we live in the absolute, since we have already created speed, eternal and ever-present.

9. We wish to glorify war—the only health giver of the world

LIBRARY
29. 4. 1911
L 861

—militarism, patriotism, the destructive arm of the Anarchist, the beautiful Ideas that kill, the contempt for woman.

10. We wish to destroy the museums, the libraries, to fight against moralism, feminism and all opportunistic and utilitarian meannesses.

11. We shall sing of the great crowds in the excitement of labour, pleasure or rebellion; of the multi-coloured and polyphonic surf of revolutions in modern capital cities; of the nocturnal vibration of arsenals and workshops beneath their violent electric moons; of the greedy stations swallowing smoking snakes; of factories suspended from the clouds by their strings of smoke; of bridges leaping like gymnasts over the diabolical cutlery of sun bathed rivers; of adventurous liners scenting the horizon; of broad-chested locomotives prancing on the rails, like huge steel horses bridled with long tubes; and of the gliding flight of aeroplanes, the sound of whose screw is like the flapping of flags, and the applause of an enthusiastic crowd.

It is in Italy that we launch this manifesto of violence, destructive and incendiary, by which we this day found Futurism, because we would deliver Italy from its canker of professors, archœologists, cicerones and antiquaries.

Italy has been too long the great market of the second-hand dealers. We would free her from the numberless museums which cover her with as many cemeteries.

Museums, cemeteries! . . . Truly identical with their sinister jostling of bodies that know one another not. Public dormitories where one sleeps for ever side by side with detested or unknown beings. Mutual ferocity of painters and sculptors slaying one another with blows of lines and colour in a single museum.

Let one pay a visit there each year as one visits one's dead once a year. . . . That we can allow! . . . Deposit flowers even once a year at the feet of the GIOCONDA, if you will! . . . But to walk daily in the museums with our sorrows,

our fragile courage and our anxiety, that is inadmissible! . . . . Would you, then, poison yourselves? Do you want to decay?

What can one find in an old picture unless it be the painful contortions of the artist striving to break the bars that stand in the way of his desire to express completely his dream?

To admire an old picture is to pour our sensitiveness into a funeral urn, instead of casting it forward in violent gushes of creation and action. Would you, then, waste the best of your strength by a useless admiration of the past, from which you can but emerge exhausted, reduced, downtrodden?

In truth, the daily haunting of museums, of libraries and of academies (those cemeteries of wasted efforts, those calvaries of crucified dreams, those ledgers of broken attempts!) is to artists what the protracted tutelage of parents is to intelligent youths, intoxicated with their talent and their ambitious determination.

For men on their death-beds, for invalids, and for prisoners, very well! The admirable past may be balsam to their wounds, since the future is closed to them. . . . But we will have none of it, we, the young, the strong, and the living FUTURISTS!

Come, then, the good incendaries with their charred fingers! . . . Here they come! Here they come! . . . Set fire to the shelves of the libraries! Deviate the course of canals to flood the cellars of the museums! . . . Oh! may the glorious canvasses drift helplessly! Seize pick-axes and hammers! Sap the foundations of the venerable cities!

The oldest amongst us is thirty; we have, therefore, ten years at least to accomplish our task. When we are forty, let others, younger and more valiant, throw us into the basket like useless manuscripts! . . . They will come against us from afar, from everywhere, bounding upon the lightsome measure of their first poems, scratching the air with their hooked fingers, and scenting at the academy doors the plea-

sant odour of our rotting minds, marked out already for the catacombs of the libraries.

But we shall not be there. They will find us at length, one winter's night, right out in the country, beneath a dreary shed, the monotonous rain-drops strumming on the roof, cowering by our trepidating aeroplanes, warming our hands at the miserable fire which our books of to-day will make, blazing gaily beneath the dazzling flight of their images.

They will surge around us, breathless with anxiety and disappointment, and all, exasperated by our dauntless courage, will throw themselves upon us to slay us, with all the more hatred because their hearts will be filled with love and admiration for us. And Injustice, strong and healthy, will burst forth radiantly in their eyes. For art can be nought but violence, cruelty and injustice.

The oldest amongst us is thirty, and yet we have already squandered treasures, treasures of strength, of love, of courage, of rugged determination, hastily, in a frenzy, without counting, with all our might, breathlessly.

Look at us! We are not breathless. . . . Our heart does not feel the slightest weariness! For it is fed with fire, hatred and speed! . . . That surprises you? It is because you do not remember even having lived! We stand upon the summit of the world and once more we cast our challenge to the stars!

Your objections? Enough! Enough! I know them! It is agreed! We know well what our fine and false intelligence tells us. We are, it says, only the summary and the extension of our ancestors. Perhaps! Very well! . . . What matter? . . But we do not wish to hear! Beware of repeating those infamous words! Better lift your head!

We stand upon the summit of the world and once more we cast our challenge to the stars!

F. T. MARINETTI.

The Exhibitors to the Public.

We seek for a style of motion, a thing which has never been attempted before us.

Far from resting upon the examples of the Greeks and the Old Masters, we constantly extol individual intuition; our object is to determine completely new laws which may deliver painting from the wavering uncertainty in which it lingers.

Our desire, to give as far as possible to our pictures a solid construction, can never bear us back to any tradition whatsoever. Of that we are firmly convinced.

All the truths learnt in the schools or in the studios are abolished for us. Our hands are free enough and pure enough to start everything afresh.

We declare, that there can be no modern painting without the starting point of an absolutely modern sensation, and none can contradict us when we state that *painting* and *sensation* are two inseparable words.

If our pictures are futurist, it is because they are the result of absolutely futurist conceptions, ethical, æsthetic, political and social.

To paint from the posing model is an absurdity, and an act of mental cowardice, even if the model be translated upon the picture in linear, spherical or cubic forms.

To lend an allegorical significance to an ordinary nude figure, deriving the meaning of the picture from the objects held by the model or from those which are arranged about him, is to our mind the evidence of a traditional and academic mentality.

This method, very similar to that employed by the Greeks, by Raphael, by Titian, by Veronese, must necessarily displease us.

While we repudiate impressionism, we emphatically condemn the present reaction which, in order to kill impressionism, brings back painting to old academic forms.

It is only possible to react against impressionism by surpassing it.

Nothing is more absurd than to fight it by adopting the pictural laws which preceded it.

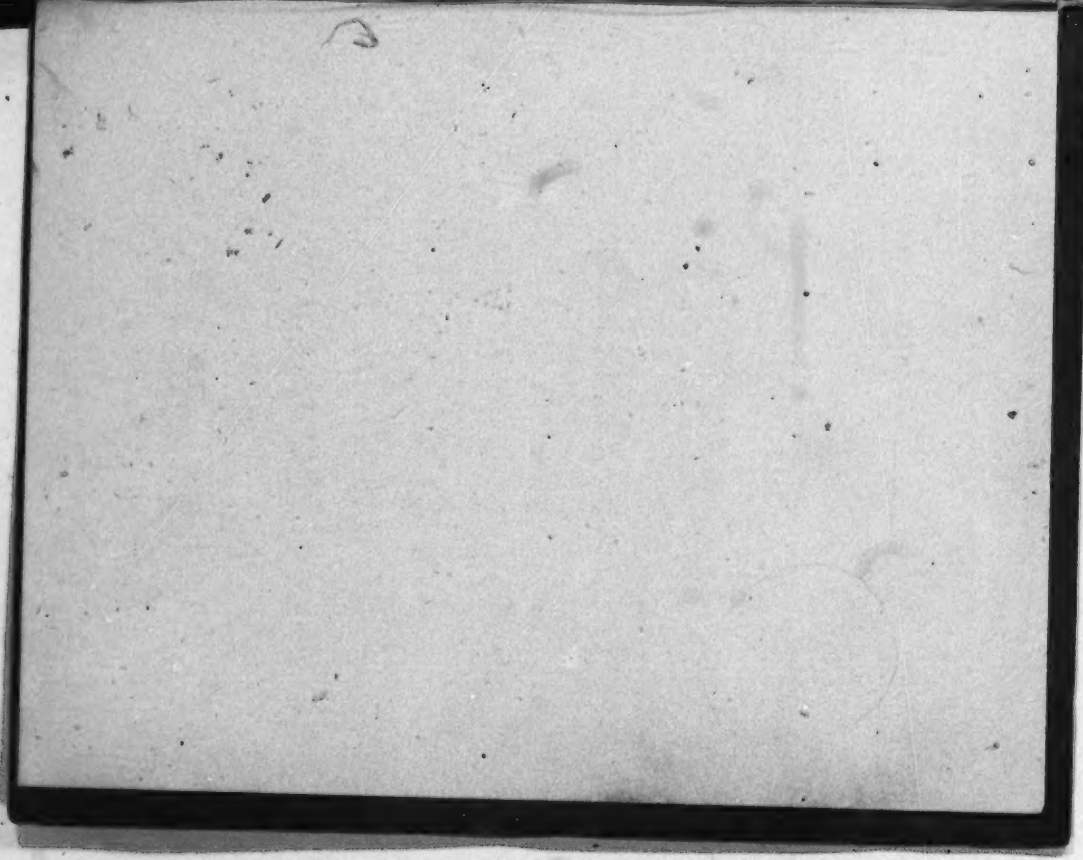
The points of contact which the quest of style may have with the so-called *classic art* do not concern us.

*** ***

Others will seek, and will, no doubt, discover, these analogies which in any case cannot be looked upon as a return to methods, conceptions and values transmitted by classical painting.

A few examples will illustrate our theory.

We see no difference between one of those nude figures commonly called *artistic* and an anatomical plate. There is, on the other hand, an enormous difference between one



THE ITALIAN FUTURIST PAINTERS

of these nude figures and our futurist conception of the human body.

Perspective, such as it is understood by the majority of painters, has for us the very same value which they lend to an engineer's design.

The simultaneousness of states of mind in the work of art : that is the intoxicating aim of our art.

Let us explain again by examples. In painting a person on a balcony, seen from inside the room, we do not limit the scene to what the square frame of the window renders visible ; but we try to render the sum total of visual sensations which the person on the balcony has experienced ; the sun-bathed throng in the street, the double row of houses which stretch to right and left, the beflowered balconies, etc. This implies the simultaneousness of the ambient, and, therefore, the dislocation and dismemberment of objects, the scattering and fusion of details, freed from accepted logic, and independent from one another.

In order to make the spectator live in the centre of the picture, as we express it in our manifesto, the picture must be the synthesis of *what one remembers* and of *what one sees*.

You must render the invisible which stirs and lives beyond intervening obstacles, what we have on the right, on the left, and behind us, and not merely the small square of life artificially compressed, as it were, by the wings of a stage.

We have declared in our manifesto that what must be rendered is the *dynamic sensation*, that is to say, the par-

ticular rhythm of each object, its inclination, its movement, or, to put it more exactly, its interior force.

It is usual to consider the human being in its different aspects of motion or stillness, of joyous excitement or grave melancholy.

What is overlooked is that all inanimate objects display, by their lines, calmness or frenzy, sadness or gaiety. These various tendencies lend to the lines of which they are formed a sense and character of weighty stability or of aerial lightness.

Every object reveals by its lines how it would resolve itself were it to follow the tendencies of its forces.

This decomposition is not governed by fixed laws but it varies according to the characteristic personality of the object and the emotions of the onlooker.

Furthermore, every object influences its neighbour, not by reflections of light (the foundation of *impressionistic primitivism*), but by a real competition of lines and by real conflicts of planes, following the emotional law which governs the picture (the foundation of *futurist primitivism*).

Dynamism is the simultaneous action of the object's characteristic movement (absolute movement) with the transformations to which the object submits in its displacements in relation to its mobile or immobile ambience (relative movement).

The dynamism of an object, then, does not consist alone in the decomposition of objects. It is certain that decomposition and deformation (decentralization) have value for

movement, because they interrupt the continuity of line, break the rhythm of the silhouette, and augment the shock: indications, possibilities, the direction of forms. But this is not yet the true futurist, plastic dynamism.

On the other hand, this consists neither in the trajectory, nor in pendulem-like balance, nor in the displacement of a point *a* to a point *b*. Dynamism is the lyrical conception of forms interpreted by infinite manifestation of their relations between absolute movement and relative movement, between ambience and object, until it forms a whole : *ambience* and object. It is a creation of a new form which gives the relation between weight and expansion, between rotatory movement and revolving (or revolution) movement. Dynamism is life itself seized in the form which life creates in its infinite succession.

With the desire to intensify the æsthetic emotions by blending, so to speak, the painted canvas with the soul of the spectator, we have declared that the latter "*must in future be placed in the centre of the picture.*"

He shall not be present at, but participate in the action. If we paint the phases of a riot, the crowd bustling with uplifted fists and the noisy onslaughts of cavalry are translated upon the canvas in sheaves of lines corresponding with all the conflicting forces, following the general law of violence of the picture.

These *force-lines* must encircle and involve the spectator so that he will in a manner be forced to struggle himself with the persons in the picture.

All objects, in accordance with what the painter Boccioni happily terms *physical transcendentalism*, tend to the infinite by their *force-lines* the continuity of which is measured by our intuition.

It is these *force-lines* that we must draw in order to lead back the work of art to true painting. We interpret nature by rendering these objects upon the canvas as the beginning or the prolongations of the rhythms impressed upon our sensibility by these very objects.

After having, for instance, reproduced in a picture the right shoulder or the right ear of a figure, we deem it totally vain and useless to reproduce the left shoulder or the left ear. We do not draw sounds, but their vibrating intervals. We do not paint diseases, but their symptoms and their consequences.

We may further explain our idea by a comparison drawn from the evolution of music.

Not only have we radically abandoned the motive fully developed according to its determined and, therefore, artificial equilibrium, but we suddenly and purposely intersect each motive with one or more other motives of which we never give the full development but merely the initial, central, or final notes.

As you see, there is with us not merely variety, but chaos and clashing of rhythms, totally opposed to one another, which we nevertheless assemble into a new harmony.

We thus arrive at what we call the *painting of states of mind*.

In the pictural description of the various states of mind of a leave-taking, perpendicular lines, undulating and as it were worn out, clinging here and there to silhouettes of empty bodies, may well express languidness and discouragement.

Confused and trepidating lines, either straight or curved, mingled with the outlined hurried gestures of people calling one another, will express a sensation of chaotic excitement.

On the other hand, horizontal lines, fleeting, rapid and jerky, brutally cutting into half lost profiles of faces or crumbling and rebounding fragments of landscape, will give the tumultuous feelings of the persons going away.

It is practically impossible to express in words the essential values of painting.

The public must also be convinced that in order to understand æsthetic sensations to which one is not accustomed, it is necessary to forget entirely one's intellectual culture, not in order to *assimilate* the work of art, but to *deliver one's self up* to it heart and soul.

We are beginning a new epoch of painting.

We are sure henceforward of realising conceptions of the highest importance and the most unquestionable originality. Others will follow who, with equal daring and determination, will conquer those summits of which we can only catch a glimpse. That is why we have proclaimed ourselves to be *the primitives of a completely renovated sensitiveness.*

In several of the pictures which we are presenting to the public, vibration and motion endlessly multiply each object. We have thus justified our famous statement regarding the "*running horse which has not four legs, but twenty.*"

One may remark, also, in our pictures, spots, lines, zones of colour which do not correspond to any reality, but which, in accordance with a law of our interior mathematics, musically prepare and enhance the emotion of the spectator.

We thus create a sort of emotive ambience, seeking by intuition the sympathies and the links which exist between the exterior (concrete) scene and the interior (abstract) emotion. Those lines, those spots, those zones of colour, apparently illogical and meaningless, are the mysterious keys to our pictures.

We shall no doubt be taxed with an excessive desire to define and express in tangible form the subtle ties which unite our abstract interior with the concrete exterior.

Yet, could we leave an unfettered liberty of understanding to the public which always sees as it has been taught to see, through eyes warped by routine?

We go our way, destroying each day in ourselves and in our pictures the realistic forms and the obvious details which have served us to construct a bridge of understanding between ourselves and the public. In order that the crowd may enjoy our marvellous spiritual world, of which it is ignorant, we give it the material sensation of that world.

We thus reply to the coarse and simplistic curiosity which surrounds us by the brutally realistic aspects of our primitivism.

Conclusion ; Our futurist painting embodies three new conceptions of painting :

1. That which solves the question of volumes in a picture, as opposed to the liquefaction of objects favoured by the vision of the impressionists.

2. That which leads us to translate objects according to the *force lines* which distinguish them, and by which is obtained an absolutely new power of objective poetry.

3. That (the natural consequence of the other two) which would give the emotional ambience of a picture, the synthesis of the various abstract rhythms of every object, from which there springs a fount of pictural lyricism hitherto unknown.

Umberto Boccioni.
Carlo D. Carrà.
Luigi Russolo.
Giacomo Balla.
Gino Severini.
Ardengo Soffici.

N.B.—All the ideas contained in this preface were developed at length in the lecture on Futurist Painting, delivered by the painter, Boccióni, at the Circolo Internazionale Artistico, at Rome, on May 29th, 1911.

SCULPTURE

ENSEMBLES PLASTIQUES

BOCCIONI.

BOCCIONI (Sculpture).—
Single Forms of Continuity through space
(front view).

The works which I now present to the London public are the starting point of my technical manifesto of Futurist Sculpture *(Milan, April* 11, 1912*)*. The traditional desire to fix by line and on the other hand the nature and homogeneousness even of the materials employed (marble or bronze) have contributed to make Sculpture the static art par excellence. I have thought also that one might obtain an initial dynamic element by decomposing this unity of matter into a certain number of different materials, each of which might characterise, by even its diversity, a difference of weight and expansion of molecular volumes. The problem of dynamism in Sculpture does not depend alone on the diversity of materials but especially on its interpretation of form. The research into natural form removes sculpture (and equally painting) from its origin and final goal: Architecture. Architecture is to Sculpture what composition is to painting. The utter absence of architecture is the greatest fault in Impressionist Sculpture. The pre-Impressionist study of form, following a process analogous to that of the Greeks and all primitives leads us fatally to the dead form, and consequently to immobility. This immobility is the principal character of Cubist Sculpture.

Between the real and the ideal forms, between the new form (Impressionism) and the traditional conception (pre-Impressionist, that is to say always conventionally Greek) there is a changing form in evolution, and which has nothing to do with any form hitherto conceived.

This double conception of form: form in movement (relative movement) and movement proper to form (absolute

MUSEUM

movement) can only be rendered in an instant's duration of plastic life, lived in its manifestation without cutting it by dragging it from its vital atmosphere, without stopping it in its movement, in a word without killing it.

All these convictions compel me to seek, in sculpture, not pure form but pure plastic rhythm, not the construction of bodies, but *the construction of the action of the bodies.* I have then as my ideal not pyramidical architecture (static) but spiral architecture (dynamism). That is why a body in movement is not for me a body studied in a state of immobility and afterwards modelled as if it were in movement; it is, on the contrary, a body in movement, a living reality absolutely *new* and *original.* To give a body in movement I take particular care to give its trajectory, that is to say, from one state of repose to another state of repose, but I strongly endeavour to fix the unique form which expresses its *continuity in space.*

Every intelligent person will understand that this spiral architectural construction must give birth to *sculptural spontaneity* analogous to the pictorial spontaneity proclaimed and expressed by us in our first exhibition of futurist paintings at Paris (*Bernheim Gallery, Feb. 25th,* 1912).

Traditional sculptors make the statue turn in front of the spectator, or the spectator go round the statue. Thus every visual angle of the spectator embraces one of the sides of the statue or sculptural group. This proceeding merely augments the immobility of the work, my spiral architectural construction, on the contrary, creates a continuity of forms in front of the spectator which permits him to follow ideally (through the *form-force* radiating through the

real form) a new abstract contour which expresses the body in its significant movements.

The form-force is from its centrifugal direction potentially the real living form. Form, in my sculpture, is then perceived in a more abstract way. The spectator ought to be able to ideally construct a continuity (simultaneousness) which is suggested to him by form-forces equivalent to the expansive energy of bodies. My sculptural ensemble evolves in the space created by the depth of the volume showing each profile. My sculptural ensemble does not therefore, offer a series of fixed, immobile and silhouetted profiles. Each profile reveals in itself the indication of preceding on or following profiles which make up the sculptural ensemble.

Moreover, I propose to obtain by assiduous researches a complete fusion of ambience over object, by means of *interpenetration* of planes. I propose to make the object live in its ambience without making it the slave of artificial or fixed lights, or to a supporting plane. I absolutely disdain the practice of eye-deception of the Impressionist Sculptors who, by removing themselves too far from architectural severity, in revenge have had too much recourse to painting. The conception of a sculptural object becoming the plastic result of object and ambience, naturally abolishes the distance which exists, for example, between a figure and a house situated 200 metres farther away. This conception produces the prolongation of a body in the ray of light which strikes it, and the penetration of a *void* into the *full part* which passes in front of it.

I obtain all this by uniting atmospheric blocks with the more concrete elements of reality. Consequently, if a

spherical form (the plastic equivalent of a head) is crossed by the façade of a palace situated further off, the interruped half-circle and the square façade which interrupts it, will form a new unity, composed of ambience object.

The figure shut in its traditional line must be completely forgotten, and on the contrary, the figure must be given as centre of the plastic directions in space. The Sculptors who submit to the yoke of tradition and craft ask me with a horrified air, how I can arrest the periphery of the sculptural ensemble at the moment when the figure is complete in the line determined by the material itself (clay, plaster, marble, bronze or wood) isolated in space. The reply is easy: So that the periphery of the sculptural ensemble vanishes by degrees till it loses itself in space, I colour the extreme line of the contour in black or grey and graduate and shade these colours until a central clarity is attained. I thus create an auxiliary chiaro-oscuro which forms a pivot in the atmospheric ambience (first resultant impression). This pivot serves to augment the force of the sculptural pivot in its ambience composed of plastic directions. When I do not judge it expedient to use colours (dynanism), I neglect this material means of spreading shade and I allow the sinuousities, the interruptions, the rush of straight lines and curves, to follow the direction which the movement of bodies impress on them. We shall thus succeed, in two cases, to emerge at last from the heart-rending continuity of the Greek, Gothic and Michaelangelesque figure.

UMBERTO BOCCIONI,
Futurist Painter & Sculptor.

BOCCIONI.—Dynamism of a Cyclist.

BOCCIONI (Sculpture). — Development of a Bottle through space.
(Still Life).

BOCCIONI.

No.

1. Nude (complementary dynamism of form—colour)
2. Dynamism of a cyclist
3. Elasticity
4. Matter
5. Dynamism of a footballer

6. 7. 8. 9. 10. Attempts to fix human forms in movement

11. 12. 13. 14. 15. Attempts to synthetize single forms of continuity through space

CARRÀ.

No.

16. The disintegration of flesh
17. Centrifugal forces
18. Abstract perspective of form—colour
19. The complement of form to a nude figure
20. Study for the picture, "A Woman's shape & scents"
21. Dynamic space of a jockey
22. Simultaneousness
23. Plastic transcendencies
24. Synthesis of a Music Hall
25. Form of a dancer in circular movement
26. Force centres of a boxer
27. Dynamism of a boxer
28. Architectural construction of a woman on the beach
29. A Woman's shape and scents
30. Woman—house—bottle, as a spherical expansion in space

CARRA. — Plastic Transcendencia.

RUSSOLO.—Dynamism of a Motor.

RUSSOLO.

No.

31. Dynamism of a motor

32. Dynamic volumes

33. Plastic summary of a woman's movements

34. My Dynamic self

35. Dynamic expansions (houses—lights)

BALLA.

No.

36. Dynamic decomposition of a motor in rapid movement

37. Dynamism of dispersion

38. Dynamic expansion—speed

39. Luminous successions—displacements

40. Dynamism of plasticity—noises—speed

41. Density of air—dynamism of helix

42. Dynamism of plastic lights

43. Walking lines—dynamic successions

44. Dynamism of light

45. Dynamic rhythm

BALLA.—Abstract Dynamism.

SEVERINI.—Dynamism of July 14th

SEVERINI.

No.

46. Light—speed—noise, in simultaneous interpenetration

47. Forms and colour-tone in the Argentine Tango

48. Sea—Dancer

49. Spherical expansion of light (centripetal)

49a. „ „ „ (centrifugal)

50. Dynamic decomposition of the portrait of the poet Marinetti

51. Dynamism of the 4th July

52. Light—speed—noise. (Sketch)

53. Forms and colour-tone in the Argentine Tango (1st sketch)

54. Forms and colour-tone in the Double Boston (2nd sketch)

55. Sea—Dancer (study)

56. Dynamic continuity of a tram in rapid movement

57. Sea—Dancer (study)

58. Sea—Dancer (study)

SOFFICI.

No.

59. Simultaneous dynamism of an Apaches Ball
60. Masses and planes of a landscape (design)
61. Typographical simultaneousness
62. Simultaneousness: woman—chariot—street
63. Complementaryism pictorial (tray of fruit)
64. Interpenetration of plastic planes (tray of fruit, bottle, cup)
65. Still Life (glass and cup)
66. Decomposition of a woman's face (plastic theorem)
67. Still Life (inkstand)
68. Still Life (bottle and candlestick)
69. Hellébore flowers (study)
70. Lines and volumes of a face, 1913
71. Lines and volumes of a street, 1913
72. Pictorial Synthesis of the town of Prato
73. Decomposition of a bottle and sugar basin

SOFFICI. — Simultaneous Dynamism of an Apaches Ball.

BOCCIONI.

PLASTIC ENSEMBLES.

No.

1. Muscles in quick motion.
2. Development of a bottle in space (still life)
3. Single forms of continuity through space
4. Fusion of a head and casement window

MARINETTI (Poet).

5. Portrait of Marinetti by himself
   (dynamic combination of objects)

MARINETTI AND CANGIULLO
(Poets).

6. Mademoiselle Flicflic Chapchap
   (dynamic combination of objects)

To be published shortly—

AN IMPORTANT VOLUME

"Pittura Scultura Futuriste"

(DINAMISMO PLASTICO)

Futurist Paintings and Sculpture

—

BY BOCCIONI.

—

With Fifty-one Reproductions of Pictures by Boccioni

BOCCIONI — CARRÀ — RUSSOLO
BALLA — SEVERINI
SOFFICI

—

(Edizioni Futuriste di "Poesia").
MILAN—CORSO VENEZIA 61.